

**TO: All Legislature**  
**FROM: Rep. Jesse Kremer**  
**RE: Co-Sponsorship of LRB-2810/1: prohibiting the Department of Transportation from installing certain equipment on highways.**  
**DATE: August 6, 2015**  
**Deadline for Co-Sponsorship: Wednesday, August 12, 2015**

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Originally introduced as a budget motion, this legislation aims to curb three non-essential transportation expenditures:

1. **Highway on-ramp gates** – railroad crossing arms allow highway patrol officers to manually raise and lower a gate instead of utilizing orange barrels to prevent travelers from entering an interstate.
2. **Dynamic message boards** (aka digital message signs or “DMS”) – these signs are used to alert drivers to highway travel times and conditions, traffic death statistics and to “drive sober.”
3. **Closed circuit television** (“CCTV”) – traffic cameras allow officials to monitor travel conditions.

DOT’s continued use of these items, despite the availability of more cost-effective alternatives, must be curtailed to help ease the burden on state taxpayers. According to DOT, the per-unit installation costs of the above items are as follows:

- DMS (side mount) - \$80-90,000 each
- DMS (overhead) - \$180-190,000 each
- CCTV - \$55,000 each
- Gates - \$12-15,000 each

By the end of 2017, 139 digital message signs and 410 closed circuit television systems are planned to have been installed statewide (see attachment for more information). As of January 2015, DOT estimates that over 400 highway on-ramp gates have been installed, with 180 more planned through the end of 2017. The *minimum* cost to taxpayers for the ramp gates alone would be over \$2 million, with the upper range around \$3 million.

An alternative to these costly gates would be to use orange construction barrels, which offer the same effect for a fraction of the cost. While these savings may seem small, we need to do all we can to ease the burden on taxpayers and make wise use of state funds. It is unwise to use hard-earned taxpayer dollars for more costly options when more economical options are readily available. The DOT’s gratuitous use of these non-essential highway additions must be stopped and such future waste prevented until our state’s transportation fund is more stable.

To be added on as a co-sponsor of this legislation, please reply to this email by **Wednesday, August 12**. Please call the office at 6-9175 with any questions.

*Analysis by the Legislative Reference Bureau*

The Department of Transportation (DOT) is authorized to spend moneys to maintain state highways. Under this bill, DOT is prohibited from installing on any highway overhead message boards, traffic cameras, or, if the highway is an interstate highway, on-ramp gates.